United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General presents proposed programme budget of $2,749 million for 1994-1995 to Fifth Committee; notes real growth of only 1 per cent despite United Nations' growing work-load; says Organization needs sound and reliable financial foundation.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement last night, welcomes South African multi-party agreements on interim constitution and electoral bill; invites Secretary-General to accelerate planning for possible United Nations role in country's election process.

+ Security Council, in second Presidential statement, demands that Iraq respect inviolability of Iraq-Kuwait border and prevent violations of it; expresses serious concern about recent incidents reported by UNIKOM.

+ Commission of Inquiry is appointed by Secretary-General to investigate armed attacks on UNOSOM II personnel; Commission's three members are in New York for consultations and to determine investigative procedures.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today presented the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 -- the first full budget to be prepared under his direction -- to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). He told the Committee that the budget, which amounted to $2,749 million, provided the means for the United Nations to rise to the new challenges in the wake of the cold war. It reflected real growth of only 1 per cent and a net addition of only 68 posts despite the massive expansion of the Organization's work-load.

In preparing the budget, the Secretary-General said he had sought to enhance the capacity of the United Nations in the political and humanitarian areas, to strengthen its role in international economic and social cooperation, and to increase managerial responsibility and administrative efficiency. He added that the restructuring and rationalization of the

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Organization, which had already brought about a reduction of 25 per cent in the number of high-level posts, should continue.

The Secretary-General called attention to the financial situation of the United Nations, and expressed the hope that Member States and the Secretariat would work closely together to provide it with a sound and reliable financial foundation. He noted that unpaid contributions to the regular budget now totalled $525 million; only 71 Member States had paid their assessments in full, while 42 had made no payments at all this year. Meanwhile, unpaid contributions to peace-keeping totalled $1,175 million. By the end of the year, $400 million would be owed to troop-contributing countries.

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The Security Council last night welcomed the multi-party agreements on an interim constitution and electoral bill in South Africa and invited the Secretary-General to accelerate planning for a possible United Nations role in the election process there. In a statement read out by its President, José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde), the Council said such contingency planning would include coordination with the observer missions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the European Community and the Commonwealth to expedite consideration of a request for assistance. It also commended the work being done by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA).

The Council urged the early establishment of the Transitional Executive Council and the Independent Electoral Commission. It also urged all parties in South Africa, including those which did not participate fully in the multi-party talks, to respect agreements reached during the negotiations, to recommit themselves to democratic principles, to take part in the elections and to resolve outstanding issues by peaceful means only. Stating that South Africa's transition to democracy must be underpinned by economic and social development, the Council called for international assistance in that regard.

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The Security Council last night demanded that Iraq respect the inviolability of the Iraq-Kuwait border and take all necessary means to prevent violations of that international boundary. In a statement read out by its President, José Luis Jesus (Cape Verde), the Council expressed serious concern about recent violations of the Iraq-Kuwait boundary as reported by the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM), most notably on 16 and 20 November when large numbers of Iraqi nationals crossed the boundary illegally. The Council held the Government of Iraq responsible for those breaches.

The Council reminded Iraq of its obligations under resolution 687 (1991), which formed the basis of the cease-fire after the Gulf War, and under other relevant resolutions, including most recently resolution 833 (1993), which affirmed the work of the Iraq-Kuwait Border Demarcation Commission and the boundary determined by the Commission.

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The reported violations of the demilitarized zone were brought to the Council's attention in letters from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait which described two separate incidents during which crowds of Iraqis converged on different border points. In each case, the Iraqis reportedly surrounded and threw sticks and stones at workers who were digging a trench on the Kuwaiti side. The letters stated that both incidents appeared to be orchestrated acts of provocation and suggested that the Council exert pressure on Iraq to desist from further violations.

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A Commission of Inquiry has been appointed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali to investigate armed attacks on personnel serving with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) which led to casualties among them. The move was authorized by resolution 885 (1993), which was adopted by the Security Council on 16 November to further implementation of its earlier resolutions on the matter.

The members of the Commission are: Matthew S.W. Ngulube, the Chief Justice of Zambia, who will serve as Chairman; General Emmanuel Erskine (retired) of Ghana, and General Gustave Hagglund of Finland. According to a United Nations spokesman, they have assembled in New York for consultations and to determine procedures for carrying out their investigation, as directed by the Security Council. A separate secretariat has been established to assist them, with Winston Tubman of the Office of Legal Affairs serving as Executive Secretary. The Commission has been requested to complete its investigation as soon as possible.

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